

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, December 17, 2024 7:00 PM
The Great Hall- 10 Pearl Street, 3rd Floor STOUGHTON, MA 02072
& VIRTUALLY via GOOGLE.MEETS

Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.C. 30A § 20, until March 31, 2025, this meeting will be conducted both in person and virtually via Google Meets.

A comprehensive record of the proceedings will be posted on the Town's website and/or SMAC as soon as possible after the meeting if live broadcast or livestreaming is unsuccessful. Times are approximate and items may be taken out of order at the discretion of the Chair.

Present: Chair Stephen Cavey, Vice Chair Scott Carrara, Joseph Mokrisky, Debra Roberts and Lou Gitto.

Also present: Tom Calter, Town Manager and Atty. Brian Winner, Town Counsel.

Open Session - Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Cavey called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Cavey announced that item #5 – Water & Sewer Rates Hearing and item #6 – Interview and consideration of appointment of Town Clerk – Reggie Medeiros Kowalczykowski, are tabled to the next meeting.

Citizens' Comments:

Chair Cavey reminded everyone of the parameters for citizens' comments.

Ms. Ellen Penniman, Walnut Street resident, asked for attention to the entrance to Walnut Street which has had orange barriers for over two years. It is an eyesore. Chair Cavey asked Town Manager Calter to follow up. Vice Chair Carrara offered the explanation that the barriers cannot be removed until work on the shoulder of the road is complete.

Ms. Cynthia Walsh, 1096 Park Street resident, mentioned an article in the Sunday Boston Globe that noted Fred Richard, Stoughton Olympian, as a runner-up to person of the year. Ms. Walsh welcomed the positive feedback for the Town.

Mr. Peter Banis, 41 Walnut Court resident, mentioned his concern with the future plan for the New England Sinai Hospital and concern for the divisive nature of comments on Facebook. His experience has been that the meetings for the South Elementary School have been very positive.

Ms. Lisa Lyons, precinct two, addressing Ms. Roberts directly, objected to her comments made during the previous Select Board meeting. She felt Ms. Roberts's comment was staged to publicly insult and defame her.

Mr. Juan Fox, 64 Pleasant Street resident, asked that the date for the Special Town Meeting be changed from February 3rd to February 10th. The February 3rd date was a hardship for many residents. He also asked that the noise by-law include language about engine braking. Chair Cavey asked Town Manager Calter to follow up.

Mr. David Lurie, 18 Robinette resident, remarked that the Stoughton Library is a good place for public discourse. The November vote was 600 votes more against the new school proposal. He criticized the Town Manager for not representing all residents. The vote of the June 11th election was being ignored. In 2020 the discussion about the public safety building was contentious, but the project cost was reduced due to a redesign of the building. He suggested that the working committee for the South Elementary School be dissolved, and the project be re-ordered. Mr. Lurie also asked for the completion of financial policies to protect the Town against overrides. He thanked Ms. Roberts for her efforts to find consensus on financial policies.

Ms. Marina Ryzan, Copperwood Drive resident, asked the Board to discourage fictitious rumors and information. The Board had attempted to slander Ms. Lyons.

Mr. Peter Ventresco, spoke in defense of Ms. Lyons, saying he had witnessed a verbal threat from Town Manager Calter against him and his cable show. Mr. Ventresco also suggested the possibility of nepotism at Town Hall and at the DPW, specifically mentioning Town Manager Calter and Mr. Mokrisky.

Mr. Arnie Feinberg, precinct 6, said there had been no discussion of money at the Stoughton Public Library.

Ms. Valerie Cohen, Acorn Drive resident, requested an improved financial plan. She is fatigued with overrides.

Ms. Joanne Dino, precinct 4, said the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to the residents.

Mr. Ed Defelice, 200 Ethyl Way resident, remarked that he has never seen such discord within the Town and voiced his concern that senior citizens are being forgotten. He cited the lack of senior housing.

Select Board Comments

Ms. Roberts asked that residents and others re-visit the Code of Conduct. Bullying will not be tolerated at any time. She made a request for mutual respect. In addition, Ms. Roberts brought positive news to the gathering, that Moody's rating for the Town is AA2 bond rating, which will boost the Town's credit rate. She thanked the Town Manager, the Finance Committee and the Financial Director for good financial management.

The Board took a 5-minute recess and returned at 7:54 p.m.

Mr. Mokrisky objected to Board members being accused of nepotism.

Chair Cavey wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy holidays, noting that this would be the last meeting of the Select Board until the new year.

Town Manager Comments

Town Manager Calter announced that the draft of the financial manual is well underway. The Town's financial structure is being redone in compliance with the guardrails/financial guidelines established by DOR. Town Manager Calter addressed Mr. Ventresco's comment of nepotism, stating that no member of his family works for the Town of Stoughton. He encouraged Ms. Lyons to publish the emails sent to her in which he attempted to advise her on language in the Mass General Laws and was accused of bullying.

2025 Annual License Renewals - Votes may be taken

Mr. Tisdelle explained that there were 3 lists: Attachment A (complete applications); Attachment B (Licenses not renewed) and Attachment C (applications pending). Mr. Tisdelle thanked his staff for their assistance, specifically Kelly Johnson, head of licensing and Kristen O' Brien. The goal was to present to the Select Board applications completely vetted. There are 108 completed applications, 7 non-renewals and 1 pending application, that of the Hampton Inn. Chair Cavey read the categories: Class II, Class III. pawn shop, second hand shop, common victualler, all alcohol, beer and wine, entertainment, amusement, package stores, clubs, lodging house, taxi, and fortune teller.

During discussion, the correct address for 1450 Washington Street, Apex Auto Body and C&J Auto Body & Sales was requested. Vice Chair Carrara questioned the readiness of Platinum Car Sales and whether they are in compliance with parking restrictions, and environmental regulations. He has observed non-compliance with regard to both issues. The environmental agent should re-inspect the site, noting that the business has paved an impervious surface. Mr. Tisdelle, noted that Mr. Raposo, the code enforcement officer had visited the location several times to enforce compliance regarding sewer issues and the conservation commission as well. Mr. Mokrisky remarked that car companies historically ignore the Town's rules. Chair Cavey suggested renewing the license for Platinum Sales with notice that compliance will be monitored.

The Board took a 5-minute recess and returned at 8:27 p.m.

Vice Chair Carrara made the motion to approve all renewal applications listed in Attachment A. Motion seconded by Ms. Roberts. The Board voted 5 - yes 0 - no.

Mr. Carrara said final approval for Platinum Sales is pending rectification of issues cited.

Attachment C - the application of Hampton Inn for an all-alcohol license. It was determined by the Board to not be needed as it is now operating as a migrant shelter. Mr. Tisdelle stated the objections to the application as submitted by the Board of Health, the Building Department and the Police Department.

Vice Chair Carrara made the motion to not approve the Hampton Inn application, seconded by Mr. Mokrisky. The Board voted 5 - yes 0 - no.

Atty. Brian Winner advised the Board that all alcohol licenses are automatically renewed. Denials must be followed with a notice for a public hearing. After the public hearing, the Board may vote to revoke. The denial is not legal until there has been a public hearing.

The motion was made by Vice Chair Carrara, seconded by Mr. Gitto to send notice of a public hearing for 445 Page Street, Hampton Inn to consider revocation of the alcohol license. The Board approved 5 - yes 0 - no.

FY26 Budget Presentation

Town Manager Calter expressed his disappointment that many members of the audience had left prior to tonight's budget presentation. He thanked the budget team: Mr. Tisdelle, Ms. Zaleski, Ms. Chatsko and Ms. Shropshire. The goal was to present a budget that would be self-explanatory, and the aim was to do more with fewer dollars. Town Manager Calter listed the highlights: FY26 new growth is budgeted at \$800,000; the budget increase for municipal departments is 3.62%; the

departments is 3.62%; the COLA for FY26 is 3%; the health insurance was increased by 4%; the workforce will be reduced by 4 FTE's; there is no free cash used to balance the municipal operating budget or enterprise funds; Regional Schools and Norfolk Aggie are budgeted at 100% of actual FY25 assessment; Norfolk County Retirement Fund is budgeted at 5% over FY25; municipal departments have a 5-year capital plan. The school department capital plan shall be merged in July 2026; the budget includes a \$100,000 OPEB contribution; with exception of DPW, expiring contracts have been settled; retirement buyouts have not been budgeted; strategic use of stipends allows municipal departments to do more with fewer people; no action is anticipated in the FY26 operating budget in regards to shared joint costs and accounting clean-up directive.

Town Manager Calter congratulated Mr. Peter Murphy for his role in the review of the sunset clauses and the accounts affected.

Mr. Tisdelle added that the budget included rankings of 1, 2 or 3 for proposed capital projects.

Ms. Roberts asked if the staff of the Economic Development Department was sufficient, and inquired if the staff were to be increased would there be an increase in economic development. Town Manager Calter responded that there are many staff members that contribute to the work of the Economic Development department including Mr. Tisdelle and Mr. Mokrisky. Ms. Roberts asked about provisions for the animal shelter. Town Manager Calter responded that requests had to be submitted as part of the 5-year capital plan, adding that the request for air conditioning for the shelter was not received in time, but a portable air conditioner would be installed as a temporary measure. Ms. Roberts asked about the Youth Commission. Ms. Zaleski responded it was now listed under Recreation/Human Services.

Town Manager Calter remarked that a primary goal is to build a community center at the train depot. He announced the receipt of \$2,000,000 from the State to rehabilitate the train depot. Other goals include consolidation of the highway department with a priority for infrastructure projects, and preventive maintenance of all Town buildings. There will be a continued effort to re-structure Town accounts and to close out approximately 300 accounts.

Ms. Zaleski commented that the current budget is an estimate and could be changed by either of the following: the school budget now expected at 3.8%; state estimates due in February; the hotel room tax reimbursement from the state is pending; actual numbers from Norfolk County Retirement; Southeastern and Norfolk Agriculture Schools; the MWRA/Water Department final numbers due in August; water/snow and ice numbers open-ended and open union contracts.

Town Manager Calter cautioned about FY27. State funds may be reduced and recommended that the Town prepare future budgets to come in under 3%. On the revenue side, Ms. Zaleski estimated Town's revenue at \$140,298,051 and the expenses at \$140,293,751. The following changes were credited for the stability of the budget: zero increase in the water rates, zero subsidies for enterprise funds and Cedar Hill. Mr. Mokrisky complimented Mr. Victor Barruzza, Cedar Hill Superintendent, on his management of the golf course and improvements to the golf course resulting in greater receipts.

Chair Cavey thanked the budget team its presentation. The Board would review and complete the process by January 21, 2025. The Board will meet next on January 7, 2025.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Application for a Chanukah Dreidel Display 1-day Menorah Display - Shaloh House Chabad

b. Ratification and final approval of executive session vote to approve the Stoughton Town Hall Employees Association and Stoughton Library Staff Association Memorandums of Agreement
Mr. Mokrisky made the motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Roberts. The Board voted 5 - yes 0 - no.

Special Town Meeting Warrant - Votes may be taken

a. Insert Articles into Special Town Meeting Warrant

b. Close Special Town Meeting Warrant

c. Set the Date for Special Town Meeting

Chair Cavey explained some minor changes: the addition of 3 petitioned articles; the correction of the parcel ID number of Article 1; language vetted by Town Counsel and Bond Council was added to address the Sunset Clause Article

Mr. Gitto made a motion to insert the 4 articles into the warrant. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Carrara. The motion passed 5 yes 0 - no.

Motion made by Vice Chair Carrara to close the warrant. Motion second by Mr. Mokrisky. The Board voted 5 - yes 0 - no.

Motion made by Mr. Gitto to set the date for the Special Town Meeting on February 3, 2025. Motion seconded by Mr. Mokrisky. Motion passed 4 - yes 1 - no.

Ms. Roberts made the motion to authorize and instruct Town staff to publish the Special Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Mokrisky seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 - yes 0 - no.

Mr. Mokrisky invited Luke Asack from SMAC to step out of the operating room to congratulate him and Kevin Weldon on an award received for their documentary video about the train depot. This video resulted in the Town receiving a substantial grant for rehabilitation of the train depot. The award was granted 1st place in the category of Issues and Political Process. Luke thanked the Stoughton Historical Society for their valuable assistance.

Mr. Mokrisky made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Vice Chair Carrara. The Board voted 5 – yes 0 – no.

The open session of the Select Board on December 17, 2024 was adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

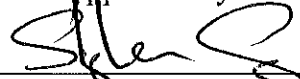
Documents Used During the Meeting

1. Item #5 Water and Sewer Rates Hearing 23 pages
2. Item #6 Interview and consideration of appointment of Town Clerk 1 page
3. Item #7 FY26 Budget Presentation - 112 pages
4. Item #8 Annual License Renewals 7 pages
5. Item #9 Consent Agenda: (a) Application for a Chanukah Dreidel Display and Menorah Display - 10 pages; (b) Ratification and final approval of executive session vote to approve the Stoughton Town Hall Employees Association and Stoughton Library Staff Association Memorandums of Agreement 16 pages

Date:

1/21/2025

Approved by:



Stephen M. Cavey, Chair

**Open Session Select Board
Tuesday, December 17, 2024 7:00 PM**